

OKANAGAN WATER STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL

A Technical Advisory Body to the Okanagan Basin Water Board

MINUTES OF A MEETING HELD THURSDAY, March 10, 2016, AT OKANAGAN REGIONAL LIBRARY, 1430 KLO ROAD, KELOWNA, B.C.

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Present

Assoc. of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of B.C.
BC Agriculture Council
BC Fruit Growers Association
BC Ground Water Association
BC Wildlife Federation – Region 8
Canadian Water Resources Association
Fisheries and Oceans Canada
Interior Health Authority
Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (Resource Mgmt)
Okanagan Collaborative Conservation Program
Okanagan College
Regional District of North Okanagan
UBC Okanagan

Don Dobson
Hans Buchler
Denise MacDonald
Marta Green
Doug Flintoft/Lorne Davies
Brian Guy/Dwayne Meredith
Doug Edwards
Rob Birtles (Chair)
Andrew Petersen
Lora Nield
Tanis Gieselman
Allison MacMillan
Renee Clark
Bernie Bauer

Regrets

Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada, Research Branch
BC Cattlemen's Association
BC Water Supply Association
City of Kelowna
City of Penticton
City of Vernon
Environment Canada – West and North
Kelowna Chamber of Commerce
Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Res. Ops. (OSNR)
Okanagan Forest Sector
Okanagan Mainline Real Estate Board
Okanagan Nation Alliance
Regional District of Central Okanagan
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Denise Neilsen/Scott Smith (alt)
Lee Hesketh/Linda Allison
Toby Pike
Andrew Reeder
Andrew Martin
Ed Stranks/Rob Miles
Ian Rogalski (alt)
Jeff Robinson
Robert Warner
Murray Wilson
David O'Keefe
Natasha Lukey
Margaret Bakelaar
Evelyn Riechert

STAFF

OBWB, Water Stewardship Director
OBWB, Office and Project Manager
OBWB, Communications Director

Nelson Jatel
James Littlely
Corinne Jackson

GUESTS

AF Consulting
Freshwater Alliance
Interior Health
Irrigation Association of BC
Irrigation Association of BC
Piteau Associates
Triton Environmental Consultants
UBC-O
UBC-O
UBC-O
UBC-O
Urban Systems
Westcoast CED Consulting

Tom Walker
Johanna Faccini
Christine Mettler
Kamran Golmohammadi
Ted van der Gulik
Bruce Naka
Martin Stewart
Kullen Smith
Grace Fan
Gyan Chhipi
Jonathan Beppele
Nargiz Rahineova
Suzan Lapp
Karol Hansma

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Rob Birtles called the meeting to order at 1 p.m. and welcomed members and guests.

2. APPROVE AGENDA

Moved by Don Dobson

Seconded by Andrew Petersen

“That the agenda for the March 10, 2016 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Moved by Doug Edwards

Seconded by Lorne Davies

“That the minutes from the February 11, 2016 meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council be approved.”

CARRIED

4. BOARD REPORT—Mr. Jatel

Ms. Warwick Sears was unable to attend the OWSC meeting. Mr. Jatel presented on her behalf. The Board had a speaker present an update on what is going on in the backcountry. Also, the Board has passed a motion directing the OWSC to look at and assess the WSA regulations that have recently come out. The Board is asking the Council to review the WSA and provide feedback to the Board. The Board will utilize the feedback in developing a letter to the Province designed to let the Province know what some of the Okanagan issues and concerns are and suggestions for improvements in water governance in BC. At the committee meeting this morning, there were some ideas presented and there is time set aside in this meeting to further discuss the new regulations with the hope of using the information discussed to draft a memo that will be circulated to the Council members. Members will provide comments on the draft and it will be finalized and then sent to the Board. They are hoping to have something to the Board in the next six weeks. There has been no request from the Province for feedback but this is an opportunity for the Council and Board to look at the legislation and the policies.

5. Agriculture Water Use Reporting Tool & Agriculture Water License Calculator (Ted van der Gulik)

Mr. van der Gulik provided a live demonstration of two tools that have been developed. 1) BC Water Use Reporting Tool which was originally developed by OBWB for irrigation districts in the Okanagan Valley. As a result of the Province hinting that all large water users are going to have to report their water use annually, the BC Water Use Reporting software was updated to include the agricultural sector, so farmers with large licences can use the tool as well. With the new groundwater licensing, anyone who is using groundwater for agriculture is going to have to report their water use as part of their licensing. They are getting close to having a useable product but there are still some stumbling blocks for new users that they are working through. They have a couple of years to continue to tweak the tool. He also discussed how the Water License Calculator will help producers determine how much water they will require when applying for new water licenses.

6. COMMITTEE REPORTS & UPDATES (Nelson Jatel)

Two committees met in the morning. The Wetlands committee focused on Phase 3 of the Okanagan Wetlands Strategy and brainstormed on what they would like the table of contents to look like for the Strategy. They discussed whether wetlands strategy should have a target of no net loss or no functional loss and thus determining what it is they want to do in the Okanagan. The water sustainability group also met and looked at the WSA and groundwater. There were a few ideas and comments from Deborah Curran from her initial review of the new regulations. It is a new era in water governance for BC. They also looked at what some of the concerns are and where improvements might be made from an Okanagan perspective. He is hoping that the Council will take a further look at what the underlying policies are that will be operationalizing the regulations and what would the Council like to see in those policies moving forward. The next few months of Council meetings have been determined with next month's topic being the state of forestry in the Okanagan. In May, the discussion will be around Interior Health and health related issues for the Okanagan. On June 7, it is the annual Board/Council meeting and there will be a

comprehensive session on FN Rights & Title. There will be no meetings in July and August and this Council group term winds down in October.

7. ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Water Sustainability Act

It is the hope that the Council will have some good discussion on where/what they think some of the main issues are with the WSA and the new regulations. Many of the Council members present have had a chance to review some of the new regulations. The Board has directed the OWSC to look at and assess the WSA regulations and provide feedback. The Board will use the feedback in developing a memo to the Province letting the Province know what some of the Okanagan issues and concerns are. The hope is that from this Council conversation a memo will be drafted and circulated back to the Council so their teams can review the document and there will be a document available at the May Council meeting. They want to do something in a timely manner as some of the things in the WSA are being acted on and policies are being developed so getting something together soon may be better. Nelson is looking for comments from the Council member organizations on anything that seems to draw a red flag and should be looked at closer (looking for institutional perspectives). Also, there was some discussion that a retrospective look at the three documents has not been completed in terms of whether initial comments made on the original document were included. This may involve creating a checklist of what Council wanted to see in the new regulations and what has been included. For instance, was something not included that Council felt was really important. This could be an appended table included in the memo.

Ms. Green noted that the BCGWA is hosting four, 5-hour seminars across the Province. The first one was held in Kamloops just after the new regulations were announced and it did help to shed some light on what is happening. There will be an opportunity to comment on two guidance documents that are being written. One is related to connectivity and EFN. This might be a place OWSC could help out as well. Ms. Green also wondered if the OWSC time might be more productive/effective if focused on the policies which haven't been written yet.

Another questions/concern is: what is the financial and human resource implication for local

government as a result of the new act as there are a number of downloaded responsibilities.

There was a comment made that what the Council should be striving for is constructive commentary. The new WSA is historic. The act is in place and the regulations are in place so now it is about implementation and what can the Council recommend to the Province to move them in the right direction in terms of implementation of these things. The OBWB has a good reputation with the Province as they provide substantive and rational feedback in helping them move forward.

It was noted that a "new" framework for BC is to write outcome based legislation which is non-prescriptive (what are they trying to achieve). When reviewing this legislation, this needs to be remembered.

Another focus needs to be on "good and more science" for water and "good and more data". In order to get good choices and decisions based on groundwater, and how much is available needs to be known. Better data is necessary. The messaging to the Province needs to be consistent.

There may be an opportunity to propose to the Province that they have a group of water experts that are accessible by some of the non-expert statutory decision makers so they can use those experts for complicated files. This might mean having two or three people identified by the Province as being senior support staff that spends a portion of their time reviewing complicated files. The Province comes up short on providing an understanding of what it means to be a statutory decision maker.

8. ROUNDTABLE - MEMBER UPDATES

Council members and guests were invited to provide an update:

- Mr. Guy (CWRA): The CWRA Annual Conference is being held in Montreal May 25-27. CWRA is going to be conducting a series of webinars on a range of issues. Check their website. There is an event being held at the Railway Club in Vancouver on March 23rd on fluvial geomorphology.
- Mr. Littley (OWBW): participated on a webinar with WWF Canada and they have done a watershed health assessment and watershed threat assessment on the Columbia Watershed and Okanagan Watershed. They reported that both were in very good health but did have high

- risk for threats. He has asked for the technical document to be sent to him and will pass it along to anyone who would like to view it. WCQI will be forwarded to the Board for the April 5th meeting and notifications will be sent out after that. The Board sent an open letter to the Province regarding mussels and the inspection stations. Hoping for an announcement in April.
- Mr. Meredith (BCWF): On March 23rd, CWRA-BC is presenting Fluvial Geomorphology – Perspectives from Academia and Consulting. It is geared to students and young professionals but everyone is welcome to attend.
 - Mr. Bauer (UBCO): April 7th, Stewart Cohen will be at the UBCO Campus to give a lecture on Climate Change and Impacts on Water Resources across Canada.
 - Ms. Green (BCGWA): busy with the water sustainability regulations. There will be 3 more, 5 hour seminars coming up with the next session on May 4th following the BCWWA Annual Conference (May 1-3).
 - Ms. Nield (FLNRO): pass
 - Mr. Ghhipi (guest): pass
 - Mr. Beppe (guest): preparing to defend his thesis in a month.
 - Mr. Naka (IIABC): The IIABC 37th annual convention will be in Kelowna November 28th-December 2nd.
 - Ms. Faccini (guest): pass
 - Mr. Walker (guest): pass
 - Ms. Gieselman (OCCP): Two reports being finished: Wetlands Institute Report and Connectivity Report. They have had over 50 projects to review in the last month and they have identified 16 to move forward on.
 - Ms. Lapp (guest): pass
 - Mr. Dobson (APEGBC): Mission Creek set back dike construction is fully complete and now they are waiting for freshet. An application for the next stage (fish enhancement) has been submitted for approval. The final stage will look at other opportunities to expand the project into additional areas. The Irrigation Districts and OBWB are looking at revisiting a study into how flows vary coming down Mission Creek through the City of Kelowna in regards to undefined aquifers.
 - Mr. Golmohammadi (guest): pass
 - Ms. MacDonald (BCFGA): In the past 6 months, they have had a number of workshops – Okanagan Agriculture Climate Change Adaptation supported by the Federal/Provincial governments under the Growing Forward agriculture investment fund. There is some seed money available (\$300,000) to initiate projects to help agriculture adapt to change in climate.
 - Mr. Buchler (BCAC): struggling to get a handle on the new water regulations. The application tool for well licenses is online.
 - Ms. Clark (RDNO): WSABC Spring workshop is April 7th. The BCWWA's annual conference is May 1-3. RDNO is putting together a bulletin for their snow survey and water supply. Their snow course information show that they are about 125% above normal for snow/water equivalent. Reservoirs are at average for 19 years of data.
 - Mr. Flintoft (BCWF): attended a meeting of the Sustainable Forest Management and Okanagan Public Advisory Group made up of Tolko, Westbank FN, and BC Timber Sales. There is a good connection with WFC. Jesse Zeaman gave a presentation at the meeting regarding the application that BCWF is trying to produce that will allow real time documentation of violations on the landbase. This group was quite interested and he plans to report back to the group at the June meeting.
 - Mr. Davies (BCWF): contacted by Dr. Adam Wei at UBCO. They have a couple of students interested in doing a project on the creeks. Interacting with UBCO to get more students out on the land doing more projects.
 - Ms. Mettler (guest): working with UBCO, ONA and Kelowna Museum Society on an exhibition on the Social Life of Water in the Okanagan. The project has been funded and they are hoping it will be open to the public in the fall. They are moving towards the consultation phase and will be following up with several council members over the next few weeks.
 - Mr. Petersen (MAG): has been involved in some seminars across the province regarding last year's drought, as well as talk on irrigation efficiencies. Next week he will be training 20-30 water stewardship officers on irrigation and helping them to understand what the farmers do and why they irrigate.
 - Ms. Rahineova (UBCO/OBWB): pass
 - Ms. Jackson (OBWB): World Water Day is March 22nd. The annual panel event will be held at the Laurel Packing House. The theme is exSTREAMS: The Okanagan Water Story and You. More attention will be given to ONA and the history of

water in the Okanagan from a FN perspective. The WaterWise program launched a pilot program with RDCO to sell rain barrels as part of the annual composter sale. 100 barrels were available at \$75 each and sold within a week. An additional 50 were added. MWW and DMM season starting. There will be more of a plant collection selection this year and more garden centres are being added. The MWW survey results have been tabulated and results indicate that the majority that took the MWW pledge followed through with their pledge.

- Mr. van der Gulik (guest): pass
- Mr. Jatel (OBWB): with regard to the EFN, they are starting to work out the project framework. They received a grant of \$400,000 from Gas Tax Canada. They secured their license for Aquarius and they bought the software so they can now report out and allow for real time access to flow data. They are in the process of writing the Phase 3 Wetlands Strategy document. They will running a photo contest starting in about 3 weeks. There will be adult and youth categories. On April 15th there will be an Okanagan Water Supply webinar from 11am-

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12pm. They will be circulating posters and ways to link in to the presentation. The June meeting will be a joint Board/Council meeting and will be held in Penticton on June 7th. Meeting is not open to guests but members of organizations that are part of the Council are welcome.

- Mr. Birtles (IH): Hullcar Aquifer website has been launched by MOE (<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/epd/regions/okanagan/envman/hullcar-aquifer.html>)

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council will be on Thursday, April 14, 2016 from 12:30 to 4:30 at Okanagan Regional Library, 1430 KLO Road Kelowna.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Moved by Doug Flintoft

“That there being no further business, the meeting of the Okanagan Water Stewardship Council of March 10, 2016 be adjourned.”

CARRIED

Chair

Executive Director